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Letter dated 15 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 14 March 2016, addressed to you by Mehmet Dânâ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Y. Halit Çevik
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 10 March 2016 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (S/2016/234), which yet again contains false assertions similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish, once again, to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent authority to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace. As to the false assertions regarding the "illegally issued notices to airmen", it must be underlined that activities within the Ercan advisory airspace that require issuance of notices to airmen are carried out by, and coordinated with, the relevant authorities of the State, in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its isolation policy, which has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or control.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus as "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as the call made in the report to the Security Council of Kofi Annan, the then Secretary-General, dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly stated "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)".

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, providing safe and swift navigation of aircraft landing at or taking off from Ercan Airport and using the airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and the necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the increasing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2015 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at nearly 3,500,000 (compared with 3,250,000 in 2014), while a 7 per cent increase is expected in 2016. Moreover, in 2015, nearly 26,000 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure, and around 210,000 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace, on which, again, a 7 per cent increase is expected in 2016. In that respect, it must be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety in full conformity with the Chicago Convention, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

At a time when the comprehensive settlement negotiations are progressing swiftly in a result-oriented atmosphere, I deem it necessary to stress the need to fully channel all our efforts towards achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus conflict in line with the established United Nations parameters and the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, which envisage a new partnership on the basis of the political equality of the two peoples of the island within the framework of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with two constituent States of equal status. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot administration should once again be reminded that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric, which is not reflective of the joint vision and cooperation expressed by the leaders of both communities on the island since the resumption of the settlement talks in May 2015. As the two future partners in the island of Cyprus, we should never lose sight of the fact that the solution of the Cyprus problem will comprehensively deal with all pending issues between the two sides and thus focus all our efforts towards the ultimate goal of settlement.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that, as the Turkish Cypriot side, we are committed to maintaining our constructive and positive stance within the context of your good offices mission in Cyprus and encourage our Greek Cypriot neighbours to follow a similar path.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mehmet **Dânâ**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus